the voluntary retirement scheme, as per Government's decision; and

(d) the repercussions of the abolition of the Internal Sales Quota on the Coffee industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) After the introduction of free sale quota under which the growers are allowed to sell upto 50 per cent of their produce with out pooling with the Coffee Board, the marketing activities of the Coffee Board has reduced. However, other activities of the Coffee Board remain the same.

(c) There has been no retrenchment of Coffee Board employees. However, a Voluntary Retirement Scheme has been introduced for the employees of the Marketing Division of Coffee Board under which a total amount of Rs. 43.80 crores is likely to be spent. But this amount will vary depending upon the number of employees opting for Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

(d) The internal sale quota upto 30 per cent of the produce which was introduced during 1992-93 has been replaced in 1994 by a Free Sale Quota Upto 50 per cent of produce. This enable the growers to sell their coffee both in domestic and external markets unlike the internal sale quota under which they could sell their produce only in the domestic market. This has given a thrust for higher exports.

**Import of Rubber**

867. SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to import rubber;

(b) if so, what is the quantum to be imported and whether the Government are thinking of including rubber under OGL; and

(c) what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Through a Public Notice on 2-3-1995 Government has allowed import of 10,000 MTs of Natural Rubber at nil duty upto 31-8-1995. Natural Rubber is, at present, in the negative list of imports. Trade Policy changes is a continual excersise in response to changes in the international and national economic situations.

**Exports and Imports**

868. SHRI SOM PAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the figures of exports and imports during the current year so far both in terms of dollars as well as rupees;

(b) what is the item-wise break-up of these and growth of fall in absolute and percentage terms over the same period during the past year; and

(c) what are the main items of exports that have shown encouraging results and what is being done to promote their exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The figures of exports and imports during April-January, 1994-95, the latest period for such data are available in the current year are as follow:

| | Exports | Imports |
|---|---|---|
| Rs. Crores: | 65482.99 | 71247.90 |
| US $ Million: | 20871.01 | 22708.42 |

(b) Latest period for which itemwise break-up of exports and imports are available relate to April-December, 1994, in the current year. These have been published in the Brochure 'Foreign Trade Statistics of India (Principal Commodities and Countries, December, 1994). Copies of this Brochure are available in the Lok Sabha Library.

(c) Exports of major products/groups which have shown encouraging results

during the current year (during April-December, 1994) are coffee, floriculture products, sports goods, marine products, plastics & linoleum, other ores and minerals, cotton yarn fabrics, made ups and project goods etc. Export Promotion is a continuous process. Country—specific and commodity—specific measures are taken to boost export. Export performance is continuously reviewed to improve performance.

**MOU between India and USA**

869. SHRI SOM PAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has signed an MOU with the United States of America for setting up an Indo-US commercial alliance;

(b) if so, what are the salient features of the MOU and how India is going to benefit from the arrangement; and

(c) when is the alliance going to be operative?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Commercial Alliance provides a framework for increased interaction between private sector enterprises in both countries for expanding business relations. The Alliance will be headed by a Board made up of private sector representatives to be nominated by US Commerce Secretary and Indian Commerce Minister. The Board will have two co-chairman, one from each side. The Board will invite private sector representatives to join and organise Business Alliances, to discuss commercial co-operation in specific sectors and implement trade/business development programmes.

(c) The MOU on the Alliance was signed on 16-1-1995. In terms of the MOU, the Alliance is expected to become operative within 90 days of signing of the MOU.

**Balanced Foreign Trade**

870. SHRI K. R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the April-December, 1994 period country's exports went up by 16.88 per cent but the imports rose by 23.92 per cent as reported in the Times of India dated 11-2-95; and

(b) when and how Government propose to balance the two policies to give a more or less balanced foreign trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A prior balancing of imports and exports is not feasible under a liberalised trade regime. Increase in imports reflect increase in volume and unit value of a number of essential production inputs required by the Indian economy. As regards exports, various measures have been undertaken to promote exports including grant of tax-exemption on Export-profits, acess to cheaper Export-credits and market-development support for Export Promotion Councils, etc.

**Coffee cultivation in Andhra Pradesh**

871. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to refer to Unstarred Question 3527 given in the Rajya Sabha on 22nd August, 1994 and state:

(a) whether any efforts are being made to extend coffee cultivation in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the programmes of the Coffee Board in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Till date 10,404 ha. have been brought under coffee cultivation in Andhra Pradesh. Under the 8th Plan, efforts are being made to expand coffee cultivation in non-traditional areas, in-